Universal Religion

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FRATERNITY
UNIVERSAL RELIGION
IN
FREEDOM
UNIVERSAL REVERENCE, JUSTICE, PEACE AND LOVE.

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UNITARIANISM, AND WHY IT FAILS TO SATISFY*.

BY ALFRED W. MARTIN.

In his noble volume, entitled "Ethical Religion," Mr. Wm. Salter has a chapter devoted to this subject. The grounds of his dissatisfaction with Unitarianism are briefly these. On its intellectual side it asks too much of us in the way of speculative belief. On its practical side it asks too little; it lacks the great thought that the perfect order of things which Omnipotence was to produce for us, we are ourselves to create; for, he says, there is a heaven-creating power in man, which, as long as men pray, is dishonored. Again, says Mr. Salter, Unitarianism lacks a threefold seriousness; in its treatment of the issues of the day, in its attitude to Jesus and in its conception of religion. Such, in bare outline, are the reasons why Unitarianism fails to satisfy one of the leading representatives of the Ethical Culture Movement. He is a critic who knows whereof he speaks. His criticisms are based on wide and careful observation. But they were made more than a decade ago and I am inclined to believe that were he rewriting this chapter to-day he would repeal, or at least modify, most of his comments. For there can be no question but that, of late, Unitarian literature and work have manifested the sort of seriousness which Mr. Salter complained it lacked, and it may fairly be doubted if any of his strictures can be lawfully charged against the denomination to-day except the first, namely, that it asks too much of us on its intellectual side. That Unitarianism asks too much of us in the way of theological belief while offering perfect freedom of thought, is quite as true to-day as it was when the denomination was born. It is here, then, that I find the main reason why Unitarianism fails to satisfy. We want a religion that is free, spiritual, universal; Unitarianism offers us one that is partly free and partly bound, partly spiritual and partly traditional, partly universal and partly sectarian.

'Tis in no bitter, hostile or carping spirit that I thus sum up the reasons for our dissatisfaction with Unitarianism, for we have much cause to be deeply grateful for all the sources of inspiration and guidance that we

*Thirteenth in a series of discourses on "Religious Reconstruction," written, after delivery at Tacoma and at Seattle, April 8th, 1900.

have derived from this denomination; one whose history records so much that is honorable and glorious, whose fellowship has included so many of the rarest spirits and master-minds of the modern world and whose greatest glory is its gracious attitude to those outside its own communion, its growing appreciation of Parker, Emerson, Potter, Frothingham, Abbot,—that splendid constellation of first magnitude stars that once shone in the Unitarian firmament but moved to other skies that they might be free to let their light shine. Far be it from me to underrate the liberalizing services of Unitarianism, far be it from me to forget what we owe to Unitarian influences and institutions. For, the memory of them is dear and precious; in reverent remembrance would I hold them all and pay them the tribute of my abiding gratitude and veneration. It will therefore be in distinct contradiction of my purpose if, in what I shall say, I let slip a single word that seems to show forgetfulness of this acknowledged debt.

When we organized our religious movement in avowed independence of Unitarianism and all other sects of Christianity, the step was criticized by many of "the brethren" as "utterly unwarranted and ill-judged," as "hasty and hot-headed," as "foolish and fresh," as "a mark of conceit and youthful restlessness," as "the sign of a desire to be meteoric," as "prompted by the desire for notoriety and fame." And these our Unitarian brethern would fain persuade us that if we will only come to ourselves, bury our superficial objections and reunite with them, we shall be happier, stronger, accomplish more positive good and reap all the benefits of association with a well organized body.

Surely, then, in view of these criticisms and assurances, our time will not be misspent if we briefly review the grounds of our dissatisfaction with Unitarianism. Nay more, since we have not the slightest intention of renouncing our position we are in honor and duty bound to justify our isolation, to state our case and to recognize the serious responsibilities it entails.

A great national organization, political or religious, is not to be judged by the opinions held and advocated by any of its individual members, but only by the platform or creed which it sets forth in its organic capacity. For instance, the Republican party is not to be judged by the opinions of Senator Wolcott on silver, or by those of Senator Hoar on imperialism, but only by that platform which is adopted in national assembly by the collective voice of all Republicans. So Unitarianism is not to be judged by the opinions of Furness on the resurrection, or of Martineau on

the Messiah, but only by such statements as the denomination agrees upon, in national conference, by the collective voice of all its members. Just as when we wish to know what Presbyterianism is we go not to Briggs, not to Alexander, not to Parkhurst, but to the "Westminster Confession," which is the authoritative standard of the Presbyterian faith; so when we want to know what Unitarianism stands for we go not to Savage, not to Brown, not to Ames, but to the Constitution of the National Unitarian Conference, the official declaration of the Unitarian position. Every denomination is justly estimated only by its official collective utterances, not by the statement of any individual preachers or laymen in its communion. The creed of an individual commits no one but himself, the creed of a denomination commits all who belong to it.

Now, on September 26th, 1894, at Saratoga, the latest collective utterance of the Unitarian position was made and subsequently proclaimed in the columns of the "Christian Register" as the "Unitarian Banner."

The crucial words of this statement are contained in the preamble and first article which read as follows:

The conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches was formed in the year 1865, with the purpose of strengthening the churches and societies which should unite in it for more and better work for the kingdom of God. These churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.

Article 1. The churches and other organizations here represented unite themselves in a common body to be known as the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches.

The National Conference is a delegate body, composed of representatives from all the Unitarian churches in America, appointed to attend its biennial sessions.* To be sure this Conference has no right to say to any church or individual, you are not a Unitarian and you have no right to the name. This Conference has no such excluding power, differing in this respect from the corresponding Orthodox organizations. Nevertheless it cannot be claimed that this preamble and first article have no authority whatever over the Unitarian churches of America, that the state-

*If there are any Unitarian churches not identified with the Conference it is, so far as I know, only for financial reasons.

ments therein made are "mere rhetoric" and have no binding force on the conscience of individual Unitarians. For this collective statement was adopted without a single dissenting voice, amid tremendous enthusiasm and even to this day is published in the first column of the first page of the Christian Register, the only denominational organ. No individual Unitarian, then, can honorably disclaim this definition of Unitarianism any more than the volunteer in the Philippines can honorably disown the government that pays and uniforms him. Any Unitarian church (or individual) wishing to keep the Unitarian name and yet not be committed to acceptance of (1) the religion of Jesus, (2) the Christian name and (3) love to God, should publicly declare that "it does not profess with others what it cannot profess for itself."

But why, it will be asked, should anyone feel committed to this creedlet of three articles when the last half of the preamble affirms that the fullest liberty is accorded to all? Our answer is, why play fast and loose with freedom and bondage by setting up a theological test and then conceding freedom of thought? I do not see that the privilege granted at the close of the preamble interferes with the fact that Unitarianism stands for the religion of Jesus, love to God, the Christian name. Having declared its adherence to these, any later explanation to the effect that there is no intention to exclude those who do not accept them does not nullify the fact that the movement has taken its stand as a Christian body and is pledged to the religion of Jesus. Every man who could not accept this position would be compromised by his connection with the movement, so that the explanatory clause at the end of the preamble in no way saves the denomination in the eyes of the world. The only way it can redeem itself is by striking out of its constitution the limiting elements and standing for freedom alone, or, by harmonizing these elements with the professed freedom. Not a few of the more prominent representatives of the denomination are conscious of this necessity. Rev. W. C. Gannett, for instance, commenting on the constitution said, "it is not so frank, not so complete, not so exactly fair to him of differing belief as it might be. The defining clause and the liberating clause should have been made fully consonant." Then, proposing a substitute for the objectionable features, Mr. Gannett continues:

"The phrase 'with virtual unanimity our churches accept', etc.—would be exacter justice. And in the Conference name, 'Other Independent' or 'Kindred' or 'Affiliated' would be

better than 'Other Christian;' for if we really mean no shadow of a test, it would be nobler not to put that preference of ours upon the comrades of differing belief, or of the same belief but differing name, who are invited in."*

Every genuinely catholic soul will respond to these sentiments with a sincere and grateful amen. It certainly does no good for a political organization to TALK free trade if it VOTES protection. Neither can it do any good for a religious body to TALK free religion IF it VOTES creed, religion. Just as there were Democrats who wanted civil liberty and saw nothing contradictory thereto in slavery, just as there were Republicans who desired civil service reform yet put thousands of their own party-men into office, so Unitarians, loud in their profession of freedom, see nothing contradictory to it in setting up acceptance of the Christian name and of the religion of Jesus in their national bond of union.

And the successive attempts, in '66, '68, '82 and '94, to save the "Christian" character of the body without infringing on freedom of thought, only shows how liberal is the spirit of Unitarianism, yet also how inextricably embarrassed it is by its compromised position. For a denomination to declare with one breath for "the religion of Jesus" and with the next for "the fullest liberty" is not an example of that ideal test of fellowship of which Mr. Gannett has spoken and which alone can satisfy a free soul.

In its double devotion to liberty and a creedlet, Unitarianism follows the example of its illustrious representative, Channing, who, in his essay on "Creeds," utters the strongest possible protest against them in words all aglow with the love of liberty, and yet at the same time he accepted the infallibility of Jesus. This inconsistency the denomination has inherited from Channing, as the history of the "preamble" proves. Surely the simple love of liberty, truth, justice and love is an all-sufficient basis for a truly liberal religious organization, apart from any theological statement whatever; its platform so broad that no liberal mind could feel excluded, forbearing to prescribe to its members a creed, even in so homeopathic a dose as a name. For plainly each of such names as Baptist, Adventist, Methodist, Unitarian, is a condensed creed and excludes all who do not choose to accept it. A Jew will not join a Society which, in calling itself "Christian," virtually makes him profess faith in Christianity by connecting himself with it. The only just, generous, noble course is to shun every name that can offend the conscience of any one and adopt a name in harmony with universal

*Unity. Oct, 18th, 1894.

ends. As long as Unitarianism, professing to proffer "all the freedom one wants," keeps a creedlet in its national constitution, so long will there be need for more freedom.

(To be concluded)

SYNOPSIS OF REPORTS

Read at the Eighth Annual Roll-Call Sociable of the First Free Church of Tacoma, January 7th, 1901.

Report of Alfred W. Martin.

It is a source of great satisfaction to me to come before you with this eighth annual report, recording achievements that bear witness to life, loyalty, enthusiasm and growth in our Society. Each year since it was organized have we been privileged to report progress in the various branches of our church-activity, and this gratifying record we must now make, not a cause for complacent satisfaction, but rather an occasion for divine discontent, conscious of the vast realm of the unattained that awaits our entrance.

During the past year 39 names have been added to our membership roll, bringing the total enrollment up to 492, and making the average increase per annum, for the eight years of our corporate existence, 46. The advent of better times and larger opportunity for business enterprise has led directly to the reduction in the number of removals from the city, caused chiefly by the protracted hard times that began in '93. During the year 1900, 32 of our members left the city as against nearly twice that number in 1899.

With the obituaries of by-gone years we have to register the decease of four members. THOMAS J. THOMPSON, father of the first president of our Society; an earnest champion of our Cause, and one of the first to declare his sympathy with the forward movement from Unitarian Christianity, to Universal Religion, taken on the night of November 27th, 1892. As he was the oldest of our members, so was DEWEY ROGERS the youngest, a brave, true-hearted lad who lost his life in the service of his country's cause. And scarcely had news been brought us from Alaska of the death of MR. HOFFMAN, whose retiring disposition made him known to but few of our members, when announcement came of the accidental death of FRED W. HYDE, a young man whose life-record was exceptionally fine, and whose loyalty to this church and its principles was one of the potent inspirations of my ministry.

Counting the number of resident members, January 1st, 1901, I find there are 240 in all. But on looking over their names I find that some 23 are scarcely entitled to inclusion in this number, because they have ceased to attend our Sunday meetings, they take no practical part in our work; they have fallen into the

fatal habit of indifference and retain only a surface, nominal membership in the Society. I speak of these people in no pessimistic spirit, for I feel that we are to be congratulated on having so small a percentage of nominal members.

Compared with earlier years, the attendance at the Sunday services is quite up to the average, the places made vacant by the removal of members from the city having been taken by new comers, thus securing an average attendance of nearly 200. The largest audiences of the year were those attracted by the series of discourses on religious reconstruction, which began in January and extended, with occasional interruptions, to May.

As in the previous year, I had but one pulpit-exchange during 1900, that with Rev. Wm. R. Lord, of the Unitarian church in Portland. Rev. Arthur B. Ellis of the Co-operative Brotherhood at Burley, spoke in my stead on December 2nd, and with these two exceptions I have been at my accustomed post every Sunday morning of the church year.

Our Sunday School has been reported upon by its secretary-treasurer and by its librarian. To their encouraging account of last year's work let me add that the staff of teachers and other helpers in the school is one of which any minister and church might well be proud. The remarkable results of the weekly examinations, which I personally conduct every Sunday afternoon, testify to the fidelity and efficiency of those who have the education of the scholars in their care.

The Free Church Record, henceforth to be known as "Universal Religion," has been a self-sustaining organ of the Society for eight years, and as it enters upon the ninth let me bespeak for it a larger patronage than it has thus far received. Let every member decide to have a copy of this monthly in the home, more especially as it will have new and attractive features that will make it desirable for every family in our church to take it and read it.

The Free Church Tract Fund has had an exceptional enlargement within the past year, due to the publication and sale of selected discourses in the series on "Religious Reconstruction." With nearly sixty dollars in the treasury we are in a position to extend our publication-work far beyond its present limits.

The Society has been made the recipient of several donations of which grateful mention should be made in this report. From Mrs. A. P. Tapley of Boston, $25.00, and for the third time within recent years; from Mr. S. A. Hartwell, Louisville, Ky., $25.00; from Mrs. Wm. B. Parker of Boston, daughter of our late lamented honorary trustee, Octavius B. Frothingham, a box of valuable books

from her father's library; from Mr. G. L. Holmes of this city, the handsome book-case that you have already seen in our auditorium; from Miss J. W. Frothingham, $800, the proceeds of a sale held in Boston last April for the benefit of our church. This munificent gift enabled us to purchase our present organ, to repaint both the church edifice and the adjoining property, to contribute $30 to our Post-office Mission, $30.00 to the "Home Library" work and $40.00 to the general treasury of the Ladies' Friendly Society. Besides these five are the donations identified with the names of two of our resident members, Mrs. R. T. Reid, who raised $15.00 from non-resident friends of our Cause to assist in defraying the cost of the new hymnal which was introduced at last Sunday's service, and Mrs. F. W. Low, who—from the sale of 600 copies of "Liberty, Loyalty, Love," a booklet of quotations from my published sermons, which she herself compiled,—has realized $120.00. of which $100.00 will be devoted to the purchase of the new hymn books, and the remainder, to the needs of the Ladies' Friendly Society.

The kindly grant by the trustees of an extra month's vacation enabled me to re-visit Europe and as a token of my appreciation of this extra leave of absence I prepared and delivered for the benefit of the church, two lectures at the Tacoma Theatre—one on "the Paris exposition" and the other on "the Passion Play," from which a net income of over $600.00 was derived.

Ever since the organization of our sister Society in Seattle I have cherished the hope that a competent man might be found to assume the duties and splendid opportunities of that large field. Correspondence with two or three men that I thought would come having yielded no practical results, I resorted to an innovation in the form of an advertisement. It appeared in "Unity" a non-sectarian Chicago weekly. "Wanted, a young minister; must be well educated, free-minded, progressive; to take charge of an independent religious society in the Pacific Northwest, where he can be untrammeled by tradition, unhampered by denominational standards, free to be HIMSELF." Up to date sixteen responses to this advertisement have been received and it now seems certain that the Seattle Society will have some one who can share with me the work of developing our Cause in that promising field. Given the right man stationed there and we shall be in a position to proceed to Everett and to Whatcom, or Fairhaven, where sympathizers with our movement are still asking, "when will we have such a movement here?"

Most assuredly have we entered the 20th century with more abundant reasons for encouragement in

the great work we have in hand. And as each new year furnishes fresh proof that the trend of religious progress is in the direction which we are moving, it cannot but inspire us all to stand steadfastly true to our colors, resolved to give our noble, sacred Cause ever more and more of consecrated service and zeal.

The Free Church Record.

Samuel Collyer, Treas.

The "Free Church Record" enters the Twentieth Century, and the ninth year of its existence, with a new name, no unpaid bills and Fifty-eight dollars and fifty-eight cents ($58.58) in the hands of the treasurer.

The new name chosen for it represents unqualifiedly and without confusion the cause for which we stand, namely: "UNIVERSAL RELIGION;" "universal reverence, justice, peace and love; freedom of thought and of speech; the method of science in the search for truth and fraternity in freedom," and it is the sincere hope of the publishers that the title will be satisfactory to our friends and the friends of the cause of universal religion everywhere.

Each member of the Society can become a missionary in a good cause by subscribing to the paper, reading it and then passing it on through the mails to friends elsewhere whom they know or suspect to be in sympathy with us.

Our little journal travels through eighteen states and territories, in addition to Canada, the Hawaiian Islands and England, leaving its message of truth wherever it goes, and we should all see to it that so far as it lies in our power its journey shall be extended to the uttermost parts of the earth.

The Fortnightly Club.

Harvey L. Johnson, Presd't

The work of the Fortnightly Club during the first half of the past year consisted principally in raising funds with which to maintain the church choir. For this purpose various entertainments were given from which we realized about $125.00 all of which was expended with the exception of about $25.00 which we now have on hand.

During the last half of the year the Club has devoted its effort to promoting sociability among its members, and advancing the general interests of the church. Mr. Martin very kindly consented to deliver a series of lecture-talks on his travels in Europe, which lecture-talks, delivered once each month, have not only proved to be exceedingly interesting and instructive to the members, but they have resulted in increasing the membership to the extent that the Club now has the largest membership of its history. Several special entertainments have been planned for the present year and indications are, that this will be

the most prosperous year, in every way, the Club has ever experienced.

O. B. Frothingham Fraternity.

Walter Loveday, Presd't

The O. B. Frothingham Fraternity was organized two years ago for the men members of the Church, having for its object the furtherance of their social and intellectual welfare and the interests of the church. Its meetings were held monthly during the six winter months. Addresses on timely subjects were given by Messsrs. Fife, Mason, Reynolds and Miss Maude Remington. After the address there was an informal discussion of the subject followed by social converse and refreshments. It is the plan of the executive committee to arrange for the holding of similar meetings next season, a variety of causes having necessitated their temporary suspension during the present year.

The Ladies' Friendly Society.

E. Adelia Low, Presd't

During the past year our membership has increased to fifty-five and all the meetings are well attended. A series of nine monthly teas of a very novel and interesting nature was arranged for, each in turn under the direction of two of the members, the expenses being borne by the Society. On alternate Wednesday afternoons business meetings have been held. A magazine, called "The Miscellany," has been issued by the society under the editorship of Miss VanRuyper and contributed to by the members.

Our gifts have been numerous, including one hundred dollars from our ever kind friend Miss Frothingham, five dollars from Mrs. Ripley of Boston, five dollars from Miss Tidmarsh, a picture from Mrs. Johnstone, a tea cloth from Mrs. Frank Adams of Seattle, twenty dollars from the "Liberty, Loyalty and Love" fund, and a box of Christmas holly and greens from Mrs. Cranston.

The financial condition of the Society is good, having taken in fifty-three dollars in dues, twenty dollars from the sale of the small organ, and seventy-five dollars from the sale of Christmas goodies which was held down town the Saturday before Christmas.

The committes in charge of the Hospital, Asylum, Home Library, and Post-Office Mission work are doing good work and extending their limits into wider fields making the Ladies' Friendly Society one of the strongest organizations connected with the church.

The "Miscellany."

Alice C. VanRuyper, editor.

The Miscellany Magazine was born on the 31st, of October, 1900, and like the offspring of pious parents, came into existence with its career ready mapped out for it.

The Miscellany was to have a mission, and that mission, a humble one, indeed, and yet no easy one to fulfil, was to entertain, to be attractive. No doubt it were a prouder office to instruct, a godlier one to reform: yet what is there so rare and so engaging, so refreshing and so welcome, as that which comes but to amuse, gracefully, tastefully and in season?

Previous to its first appearance, its godmother, the editor, after having duly named it the Miscellany, a colorless and non-committal title, prepared for it an elaborate and descriptive sub-title,—a Periodical of Wit and Wisdom, Sentiment and Satire. This she did before any of the contributions had been sent in for her inspection, in a fine scientific spirit of reliance upon the principle of supply and demand. And the principle was found to work like a charm, for this monthly has already displayed a sample or two of each of its advertised wares, having produced a funny story, a learned article, a love story, and at least two satires.

Thus far but two numbers have been issued.—two brief, bright irruptions into the solemnity of Ladies' Friendly Business Meetings; and whether it has in any degree fulfilled its humble mission it is not for me to say. For this much however, I can vouch; its financial condition is sound—none sounder,—for the Miscellany, like the Roycroft books, is done by hand; and its circulation is steadily increasing, for were there not 14 ladies at the first meeting and 17 at the second?

Hospitals Committee.

Mrs. F. Whitney, chairman.

The committee on Hospital work reports an average of two visits per month to the three hospitals, the distribution of literature, fresh and canned fruits, jellies and clothing. At the County Hospital we found a demand for our Free Church publications, a library of 30 books has been established at the jail and once a month magazines and papers are left for the prisoners. The committee feels greatly encouraged by the result of its work.

The Adult's Library.

Alice C. VanRuyper, (librarian)

Most of the books in this library came to us as the generous gift of Mrs. William B. Parker, daughter of the late O. B. Frothingham, of whose library they made a part. Many books have since been added by Mr. Martin. The books are mainly histories and essays, ethical, critical, and biographical, and sermons; and it is fitting that such books should form our library, for we, as the latest-forged link in the chain of historical continuity in religion, are ourselves making history, and our brief but vigorous re-

ligious life has been nourished by essays and sermons. Whatever is created by thought is in turn creative of thought; so our movement, as it is the product of thought, is no less the parent of thought. It stimulates thought, which goes forth in search of further knowledge and of the exquisite companionship of the thought of others. This knowledge and this thought our little library is here to supply. It is not complete; but we hope soon to acquire such other books as will make it so—the works of certain of the poets and still other of the modern philosophers. When these have been added our library will perfectly represent our church and, I believe, ours alone; for what other church, I ask it humbly and exultingly, is so deeply at one in spirit with the noblest recorded thoughts of the seers and the free souls of time?

No doubt our library will be a source of honest pride to us; but I think that, if you will make such free use of it as your librarian hopes, it may serve to add to that great fund of vitality that we have accumulated in our eight years of life, and that gives us such happy consciousness of strength and security and independence. It remains for us to express our appreciation of this welcome gift in the manner that will most gratify the givers—by making it our own and freely using it.

The Pansy Club.

Mrs. T. O. Abbott.

This organization is a school for teaching a systematic course of sewing to (now) eighteen little girls. The work is divided into three grades, the first beguiling the children by means of colored thread and bright bits of cloth into a knowledge of the plain stitches. In the second book they have to deal with such intricasies as button-holes, eyelets and eyelet-holes and even flys, flaps and gussets. They are thus prepared for the stern realities of patching and darning which the third book has in store for them together with hem-stitching and some of the principal embroidery stitches. Each child is furnished with a blank book in which each completed and approved model is pinned for inspection at the end of the term and for her possession at the completion of the course.

The class meets every Saturday morning at Miss Dewey's kindergarten room, for an hour and a half, the last fifteen minutes being given to reading. The yearly dues are 25 cents and the year closed with $2.45 in the treasury.

Mrs. Martin closed the year by giving them a party at which she gave prizes to the two showing the best work done, also to the two best in attendance.

Sunday School Library.

J. Howard Fehse.

The number of books on hand at the beginning of the year was 212, with a small collection for the junior members of 25 paper-bound volumes.

During the year 88 new volumes were added, making a total of 306 books in the larger library and 30 in the junior. The total expenditure was $25.50 for these new books.

There are now 80 pupils borrowing books. There still remains in the Sunday School "Birthday" treasury $15.00 for buying new books.

Corresponding Secretary.

Laura Taylor.

At the beginning of the year a copy of the last annual report of the Society was mailed to every one of the non-resident members. Then a copy of Tract No. 12 on "Sectarianism" was sent to 12 prominent Unitarian ministers for a review. This led to the publication of "World-Unity in Religion"—a copy of which was sent to over 200 Unitarian ministers. Correspondence with a number of former members led to the enrollment of eight more names on the non-resident list which now numbers 78. Mr. Martin's discourses on Religious Reconstruction have been mailed monthly to over 100 subscribers and a total of 708 copies distributed to date. Several hundred sermons of the late O. B. Frothingham were distributed at the book-table besides copies of the various tracts published by the church. With all bills paid there remains a balance of $7.89 in the treasury.

NEWS OF THE SOCIETIES.

TACOMA.

At the annual meeting of the members of the First Free Church held Jan. 6th, trustees were elected to fill the vacancies caused by the expiration of the term of Messrs. Collyer, Snell aad Ebert and by the resignation of Mr. R. J. Davis who is now in Alaska. The election resulted in Mr. Joseph Hunt taking the place of Mr. Davis and the remainder of the board being constituted as before.

The annual roll-call sociable held Monday evening, Jan. 7th, was an exceptionally interesting and delightful occasion. The seventeen reports from officers of as many departments of the church-work showed that the Society was never so much alive and in earnest as now and that the outlook for another year of good work is most encouraging.

SEATTLE.

The second annual meeting of the Society for Universal Religion was held Jan. 13th. The attendance was good. The new board of trustees as now constituted consists

of Messrs. Arthur, Epler and George to serve three years; Messrs. Davis, Pratt and Sloan to serve two years and Messrs. Furth, Hughes and Dickinson to serve one year.

Mrs. J. M. E. Atkinson was appointed chairman of the festival committee to arrange for the holding of the second annual festival of the Society.

The introduction of congregational singing, Sunday evening, Jan. 20th proved to be an unqualified success. With Miss Beach as pianist, Mr. A. J. Lufsky as precentor and a goodly number of trained voices scattered throughout the congregation, the successful use of the new hymnal is assured.

The trustees have purchased a second hundred extra chairs for the auditorium so that every foot of available space has been used for seats. The congregation during January increased steadily and on the last two Sundays many persons were unable to gain entrance.

Interest in the "Question Box" continues to be as keen as ever. On the last Sunday evening in December, Mr. Martin answered eleven questions and on that of January, ten. The largest number of questions found in the box in one month was fourteen and the average to date is nine.

The two stereopticon lectures given by Mr. Martin in Ranke Hall for the benefit of the Society resulted in sufficient funds to pay for the recently purchased hymnals and chairs. The Society is free from debt and has a balance of nearly $100.00 in the treasury.

MODERN OCCULTISM.

Synopses of Discourses.

[In response to many requests that his present series of discourses on Modern Occultism be published in full, Mr. Martin has consented to compromise by preparing synopses of them for the columns of this monthly.]

January 13th.

THE TRUTH IN LOVE.

These four words express the spirit in which the occult movements I am to speak on will be dealt with. The world has been climbing up out of persecution, through forbearance and tolerance into appreciation, genuine and wholesouled; the spirit that is dissatisfied with tolerance, that despises forbearance, blushes at persecution. The man who comes to these occult movements with the spirit of appreciation will desire, above all else, to be just to them and he will therefore strip his mind of all prejudice and partiality, strive to put himself in the place of a representative of the movement under consideration, measure its height and breadth, fathom its depth, take it at its best, give it the benefit of any doubts, assume it has something to teach worth learning; and, if he come across anything eccentric or erroneous, fanciful or fallacious, superstitious or silly, expose it, but in the spirit of love, conscious that only thus can they be set free who are in bondage to error, fancy, or superstition.

Such is the spirit that I would

bring to my examination of modern occultism. I shall begin by taking each of the various movements seriously and assume that it has something to teach which it is worth our while to know. Living as we do in a growing world we ought to deprecate the driving down of any stakes that would set limits to human progress. We cannot have much respect in a growing world for orthodoxies and infallibilities with their assumption of finalities. That sort of bigotry is not confined to religion. It has crept into medical associations, into college professors' chairs and into the laboratories of scientists. When Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood every middle-aged doctor in England fought the discovery as the fiction of a diseased imagination. When hypnotism was discovered a scientific committee was appointed to investigate it. The report declared that hypnotism is a humbug. Yet every physician of note abroad and at home is using hypnotism as one of the most effective agents in the curing of disease. Therefore I say, with reference to Spiritualism, Christian Science, Theosophy and the rest, let us remember that we live in a growing world, and not dare to declare in advance that these movements have nothing to teach that is of value. Only as we come to them "in love" shall we get into right relations with them and discover that element of truth in them which alone keeps them alive.

January 20th.

THE CAUSES OF MODERN OCCULTISM.

Beginning with the least significant and proceeding to the most important, the causes that conspired to create these modern occult movements may be arranged under the following heads:

(1) The almost universal passion for novelty and readiness to take up any new nostrum that promises great things.

(2) The almost universal love of the marvellous and mysterious, the appetite for signs and portents, the craving for the miraculous or extraordinary. This appetite, characteristic of primitive races, has survived in our civilization and had a part in the production of occultism.

(3) The deathless desire for some positive knowledge of the unseen world; and each of the occult movements under consideration professes to shed new light on the question of the hereafter.

(4) The rapid development of the natural sciences, with their devotion to mechanical appliances and material causation, has given rise to an *intellectual* materialism, revolt from which manifested itself in these occult movements.

(5) The rapid development of inventions for increasing the comforts and luxuries of life has re-

sulted in a *practical* materialism with its worship of creature-comforts and a starvation of the spirit. What more natural than that a reaction should set in upholding practical idealism as represented in these occult movements.

What are Theosophy and Spiritualism, Christian Science and the rest, but a Nemesis, a retributive justice visited upon this generation for its practical denial of spiritual realities, its ignoring of universal relations, its absorption in the things of time and neglect of the things of eternity.

(6) Each of these occult systems represents a symptom of revulsion from those shocking and repulsive doctrines that dominated Christian thought for fifteen centuries—an angry, wrathful God, vicarious atonement, a totally depraved man, instantaneous salvation, a short earthly probation followed by a judgment and heaven or hell.

(7) The agnosticism, philosophical materialism, pessimism and atheism that resulted from the theological revolution caused by the discoveries of Copernicus. Lyell, Muller and Darwin, provoked a reaction that found expression first in Spiritualism, opposing the materialism which shut out all hope of a future life; then in Theosophy, opposing agnosticism by pointing to the Mahatmas, the possessors of the true knowledge of God and the universe; then in Christian Science and kindred movements, opposing atheism, agnosticism and materialism by appealing to "Spirit" as the "universal Principle" and building thereon a system of "practical metaphysics which furnishes not only spiritual poise and peace but also physical happiness and health.

Thus do these movements testify to the fact that there is no solace to be found in negations but only in the renewal of inquiry, finding a way out of the wilderness of agnosticism into the garden of evidence and truth.

January, 27th.

PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

In all ages literature has recorded the occurrence of those strange phenomena to which the name psychic has been given. They include clairvoyance, clairaudience, apparitions, mediumship and other occult powers possessed and exercised by certain individuals over persons and things. The attitude to these phenomena has been for the most part one of opposition, nevertheless they continued to occur and to provoke disputes as to their genuineness and meaning, till at last a few Englishmen of scientific culture and ability felt it to be a "scandal of the age" that thes disputes continued to occur with no organized effort to settle them. The conviction that fruitful results would fol-

low a systematic scientific attempt to investigate these phenomena steadily gained ground and, in February, 1882, there was formed, in England, "the Society of Psychical Research." Later a branch of the parent society was organized in America, with headquarters in Boston. The popular notion that the personnel of this Society consists of soft-headed, miracle-loving, mystery-craving, credulous, gullible people is a prodigious mistake. A glance at the membership list reveals the names of men world-renowned for their scientific ability and attainments. Prof. Sidgwick the foremost writer in England on ethical problems, a man singularly sceptical, critical and constitutionally cautious; the Rt. Hon. Arthur J. Balfour, member of parliament, fellow of the Royal Society and author of "The foundation of belief," a book that manifests a rare capacity for suspending judgment; Sir. Wm. Crookes, inventor of the Crookes tube, used in connection with the X-rays, for the last twenty-five years a prominent man in scientific circles; these were the first three presidents of the society. Besides these distinguished members may be mentioned Hutton, Myers, Wallace, Gurney and Gladstone. In the American branch there figure conspicuously among the active workers, Prof. James, perhaps the greatest living psychologist; Prof. J. H. Hyslop, of Columbia College, Prof. Langley, of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, Rev. Drs. Heber Newton and M. J. Savage, of New York city; Dr. R. Hodgson, the secretary of the American Society, a man distinguished for mental balance and caution in forming conclusions. Indeed it may be questioned if any other society can boast of prominent members so hard-headed, critical and sceptical as the chief workers in this Society at home and abroad.

Its object has been and is, not to prove any theory nor disprove it but to investigate alleged facts that have been testified to since the world began and which are testified to to-day. Are these facts genuine or spurious? Are they the expression of supernormal powers or manifestations of our ordinary faculties? Are they caused by invisible intelligences, and if not, how? What light, if any, do they shed on the problem of a future life? Such are the questions the Society set itself to answer.

Arrangements were made for systematic experiments with mediums both physical and trance; for the collecting of evidence concerning telepathy, apparitions, haunted houses, ghosts, the "subliminal self" etc., all to be carefully weighed and if possible explained. The carrying on of this scientific work has entailed a great expenditure of money, time, patient persevering

and often unpaid labor on the part of eminent men, earning their livelihood in other fields of work. These facts naturally provoke the question, are these experiments and observations worth all they cost? Can any real practical good issue from them? We must answer affirmatively and most emphatically so for several reasons. (1) To know more about these minds of ours, about our human nature, is of immense practical importance. (2) The benefit to the insane from this psychical work may be immeasurably great, seeing that it gives promise of finding a cure for cases unaffected by medical treatment. (3) If the phenomena that point to the reality of a future life are false, we cannot afford to be deceived about them. Investigation is supremely desirable to spare us the suffering that results from being fooled. (4) If these same phenomena are true we can't afford to be ignorant of them because, in that case, they mean the lifting of the terrible weight of sorrow from bereaved hearts, the removal of the awful burden of doubt about the future life, the reinforcement of our faith that the God of the universe is just and good, determined that "not one life shall be destroyed or cast as rubbish to the void when He has made the pile complete." For such reasons the work of the Psychical Research is of first-rate importance.

The Society as a body has not yet committed itself to telepathy nor to the position of the Spiritualists regarding spirit-intercourse. Many of the individual members accept both telepathy and the spiritualistic hypothesis. The recent experiments made with Mrs. Piper—a trance-medium—indicate that it may yet come to pass that the claim of Spiritualism will be established and scientific demonstration of a future life be at hand. At any rate it is from the domain of psychical research, if anywhere, that such demonstration will come. If it does not, our previous rational faith in a future life will remain as before; if demonstration be forthcoming, death will be annihilated and the world flooded with unspeakable comfort and joy.

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